

Head-Covering: A Regular Practice of the Holy Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)

In matters of clothing and garments, the general viewpoint of the Islamic Sharia is to grant maximum freedom in the choice of dresses according to the social tastes and climatic needs of the different peoples, societies and countries. Only a very few kinds of garments have been forbidden. Nonetheless, for a true Muslim, each and every act of the Holy Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and aspect of his life hold an attraction. The unconditioned love towards the Mercy to all Mankind saws also requires a Muslim to imitate him, whose each and every act and speech were protected from wrong by special divine care.

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One of the important aspects in the Prophet's clothing towards which there is a general indifference among several well-meaning Muslims is keeping the head covered. The movies and television programs – even the innocuous ones like news and debates – do their best to generate in the simple-minded public a veneration for all things west and a degradation for all things east. By giving unjustifiably more coverage to people in Islamic garments who have been "branded" criminals by the "faultless" cops, idolizing people who have converted to the Western ideology (of worshipping money and the political power of the day) while retaining their old Islamic names, and calling all things away from Islam as "modern" and "progressive" while branding everything Islamic as "outdated", they have succeeded in misleading our unsophisticated youth and adults, who sometimes even secretly harbour despise and disdain for Islam in their hearts though they may not say that in words.

However, a true Muslim, for whom obtaining the pleasure of Allah by following the footsteps of His holy Messenger saws is the sole end of life, cannot but be guided by the actions and instructions of the holy Prophet saws alone. For him, men of piety like Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umar (رضي الله عنه), his son Salim and Qasim Bin Muhammad Bin Abu Bakr and, in general, the holy Companions of the Prophet are the true role-models. Let us see what they used to do?

Hazrat Hasan Basaree (d. 110 AH) says that the holy Companions used to place their foreheads over their turbans and caps during prostration (to protect themselves from the heat of the ground). (Bukhaaree 2/137¹) Imam Tirmizi reports that they used to let the end of their *imamas* (turbans) hang down between their shoulders (over their backs) because they had come to know that the glorious Prophet saws had done this². The holy Prophet saws is also reported to have tied the turban on Hazrat Abdur Rahman Bin Auf's head³. Regarding the head-dress, there is also a verbal hadith from the Prophet saws: *The difference between our head-dress and that of the Unbelievers is that we wear turbans over caps* (while they wear turbans without caps). (Tirmizi)⁴.

In general, the Sahaba used to wear caps which were flat, touching the hairs of the head, not the ones which rise high above the heads (Tirmizi)⁵. The Islamic Sharia basically prefers the head to be covered whether with a turban or at

1. بَابُ السُّجُودِ عَلَى الثُّوبِ فِي شِدَّةِ الْحَرِّ وَقَالَ الْحَسَنُ كَانَ الْقَوْمُ يُسْجُدُونَ عَلَى الْعِمَامَةِ وَالْقُلُوسِ¹

² عن عبيد الله بن عمر عن نافع عن ابن عمر، قال: كان النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إذا اعتَمَّ سدلَ عمامته بين كتفيه. قال نافع: وكان ابن عمر يفعل ذلك. قال عبيد الله: ورأيت القاسم بن محمد وسالما يقبلان ذلك. (رواه الترمذي في الشمائل النبوية)

Hazrat Ibn e Umar reports that when the holy Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) wore turban, he would hang down its end between his shoulders (over his back). Hazrat Nafi' says that Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه) used to do that. Ubaidullah says that he saw Qasim Bin Muhammad (Bin Abu Bakr) and Salim (Bin Abdullah Bin Umar) do the same. (Tirmizi in Shamail, taken from *Khasail e Nabawi* p.162)

عن عبدالرحمن بن عوف، قال: عممني رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فسدلها بين يدي ومن خلفي. (رواه أبو داود)³

Hazrat Abdur Rahman reports that. (Abu Dawood, from *Mishkat*, p. 374)

⁴ عن ركانة عن النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قال: فرق ما بيننا وبين المشركين العمام على القلائس. رواه الترمذي وقال: هذا حديث غريب وإسناده ليس بالقائم. (مشكاة، ص

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عن أبي كيشة، قال: كان كمام أصحاب رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بُطْحاً. رواه الترمذي وقال: هذا حديث منكراً. (مشكاة، ص 374)⁵

least with a cap. Imam Tabarani reports two hadiths from Hazrat Ibn Umar which say that the holy Prophet used to wear **white caps**⁶.

Therefore, a Muslim should take care to cover his head. Giving precedence to the Prophet's ways over the ways of the world is not a matter where a Muslim would need to think twice. Particularly, a preacher and da'i (caller towards Islam) should take care to observe each and every sunnat (practice) of the holy Prophet saws. However, the broad view-point of the Sharia⁷ must not be lost sight of in such matters. People should be called to Islam and explained its merits and inculcated the love for the selfless Messenger saws so that they themselves feel like discarding their present dressing in favour of the Islamic clothing. It should not be the other way round. The way of clothing of the pious and holy people should not be treated as compulsory for each and every Muslim and a pre-condition for enjoying the blessings of Islam.

(5/121 كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يلبس قلنسوة بيضاء. وفي رواية: كمة بيضاء. (مجمع الزوائد⁶

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عن ابن عباس، قال: كل ما شئت واليس ما شئت ما أخطأتك اثنتان: سرف ومخيلة. رواه البخاري في ترجمة الباب. و عن عمرو بن شعيب عن أبيه عن جده، قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: كلوا واشربوا وتصدقوا والبسوا ما لم يخالف إسراف ولا مخيلة. رواه أحمد والنسائي وابن ماجه. (مشكاة، ص 377)

Hazrat Ibn Abbas says: Eat what you like and wear what you like as long as these two evils do not touch you: over-spending and vanity. (Imam Bukhari reports this in *Tarjamatul Baab*.)

Allah's Prophet saws said: Eat, drink, append in charity and wear (what you like, unless it is forbidden) as long as it is free from over-spending and vanity. (Reported by Ahmad, Nasai and Ibn Maja)